**All the King's Men Character List**

**Jack Burden**

A former journalist and Willie Stark's political muckraker, Jack Burden is the novel's generally reliable narrator and, arguably, its primary character. The novel traces his struggle to make sense of his past and overcome his passivity, low self esteem, lack of ambition, and lack of values. The events of the novel are framed by Jack's struggle, and these events ultimately lead to his mature revelation that he is responsible for the indirect consequences of his actions--his "burden" in the world.

Jack was born in Burden's Landing as the scion of a prominent family in the state. His primary childhood friends were Anne and Adam Stanton. After his father, the "Scholarly Attorney" Ellis Burden, left his family at a young age, his mother went through several remarriages. His neighbor, the noble Judge Irwin, acted as a surrogate father throughout much of his young life. When he was 21, Jack found himself in love with Anne Stanton. Anne ended their relationship because she realized that the talented Jack had no ambition in life.

Jack is first introduced as a jaded adult, already working for Willie Stark's political machine. He occupies a position of confidence in Willie's administration, yet despite his position of power, he treats his job with detachment. He follows Willie blindly, not out of attraction to his power (e.g., Sadie Burke), motivation by his charisma (e.g., Sugar-Boy), or even self-interest (e.g., Tiny Duffy).

A law school dropout, he is a keen historian who uses his talents to blackmail Willie's opponents--such as Judge Irwin--without regard for the consequences of his blackmail. Jack has an obsession with the past, in no small part because of his painful personal history. Ironically, he is a historian who is unable to make sense of the past or understand the past's effects on the present. Jack painstakingly researched the story of Cass Mastern, his ancestor, yet he was unable to finish his thesis on Cass because of his inability to comprehend Cass's actions. This is Jack's fatal flaw: he has no sense of responsibility, and he cannot understand why others do.

Part of Jack's struggle is his quest to understand his own past. As an adult, he is belittling towards his parents' values: his mother's multiple remarriages have led him to consider his mother incapable of love; he is unable to understand his father's abandonment of him at a young age for a life of humble charity and religious fanaticism. Ironically, Jack's most acute defining characteristics seem to be taken directly from his parents. Jack's indifference towards others makes him seem as incapable of love as his mother is; he deals with his problems as passively as his father does.

After learning of Willie's affair with Anne, Jack falls even deeper into personal nihilism, inventing the theory of the "Great Twitch": that is, all humans act on random impulse, so nobody is responsible for anything. Jack's extreme lack of responsibility ultimately leads to disaster. After he heartlessly blackmails his childhood father-figure Judge Irwin, the Judge commits suicide, and Jack learns that Irwin was his true father all along. The event causes Jack to understand the consequences of his personal actions. He understands why his supposed father Ellis Burden left him, and he realizes that his mother is indeed capable of love.

Jack's true redemption comes when Adam assassinates Willie. The deaths of his boss and his childhood friend force him to realize the truth of the "spider web theory": that all human beings are inextricably connected. At the end of the novel, he marries Anne Stanton, resolves to work for Hugh Miller, an honest politican, and is able to complete his graduate thesis on Cass Mastern's life.

**Willie Stark**

The governor of the state and prime motivator of the events of the novel, Willie is a complex man who undergoes incredible transformations over the course of the narrative. He is introduced as a populist demogogue, a savvy politician who manipulates the media, blackmails his opponents, runs nearly every aspect of state politics like a king, and delivers fiery speeches appealing to the poor of his state. Yet, through flashbacks, the audience sees vastly different versions of Willie.

Willie began as an honest, low-key country lawyer and local politician who, through a combination of luck and manipulation at the hands of others, became governor of the state. He immediately transforms from a pedant who quotes dull statistics when making his arguments to a firebrand who rouses the poor in his state with his theatrical speeches. Nearly overnight, Willie's humble attitude has vanished. He has become a man who drinks heavily, takes mistresses including Sadie Burke and Anne Stanton, abuses his subordinates, tolerates corruption, and uses blackmail and intimidation to run the state. Despite these negative qualities, Willie earnestly desires to do good, and he delivers on his promises by building roads, hospitals, and schools for the neglected poor of the state. He becomes a hero to the poor masses as the man who stood up to the old political system, whereby the wealthy business elite once dominated the state.

The complexity in Willie's characters comes from the fact that he is a moral relativist, meaning that he believes that good ends justify bad means. He tolerates corruption and uses underhanded tactics because he believes these actions are necessary to achieve his righteous goal of helping the poor in his state. This brings him into opposition with moral absolutists, people with no tolerance for bad processes. They include Hugh Miller, Willie's attorney-general, who resigns after Willie protects a corrupt cabinet member; Adam Stanton, who is eventually driven to assassinate Willie; and even Willie's wife Lucy, who simultaneously disapproves of Willie's pride and moral relativism, yet maintains faith in her husband.

Ultimately, Willie Stark is a tragic figure. He is caught in his own web of politics, betrayed by the dishonest and obsequious Tiny Duffy, and killed by Adam, an offended scion of the "Old South," over his affair with Adam's sister Anne. The novel thus illustrates the disaster of moral relativism. In a larger sense, Willie represents the looser ethics of the modern South as Warren saw it in the 1930s and 1940s.

**Adam Stanton**

Renowned surgeon, childhood friend of Jack, sister of Anne Stanton, and son of ex-governor Joel Stanton. Adam is described only as a friend and detatched doctor until late in the novel, when Willie demands that Adam administer his new hospital. Adam initially refuses because of what he perceives to be the bad influence of Willie's politics, yet he relents after learning that his father had protected Judge Irwin, who had committed a corrupt act. When it is revealed to Adam that his sister and Willie were engaged in an adulterous affair, he becomes enraged and assassinates Willie in the Capitol building. Adam is shot and killed at the scene by Willie's bodyguards.

Adam serves as a partial foil to Jack in the novel. While Jack is a moral relativist and a cynic, Adam is a moral absolutist who adheres to the rigid ethical code of the Old South, as inspired by his father. And while Jack is an aimless "student of history," Adam is a devoted surgeon. Adam and Jack are similar in that both are examples of modernist men. Both of them have the capacity to view others in a sterile manner: Jack is outwardly cynical and often compares people to machines or animals, while Adam, despite being alutristic, can view people in purely physical terms as a doctor. Both shun the materialism, cordiality, and concern for appearance of earlier generations, yet Jack does so out of ennui, Adam out of preoccupation with his medical work.

To a reader, it initially seems as if Adam is the true hero of the novel, a character who has the ambition of Willie without the lack of ethics and the candor of Jack without the cynicism. But Adam's dramatic murder of Willie indicates that he too is fatally flawed. He abandons his ethical code and decides to work for Willie following the revelation of his father's impropriety. This decision falls into the chain of events that leads to his manipulation at the hands of Tiny Duffy.

**Anne Stanton**

Jack's boyhood love, the sister of Adam Stanton, the daughter of ex-governor Joel Stanton, and in the latter half of the novel, the mistress of Willie Stark. She was a childhood friend of Jack, and in her late teenage years, the two were in love. But she was turned off by Jack's extreme lack of ambition, and the relationship ended.

In the novel, she spends most of her time volunteering at a children's home. Although she criticizes Jack for working with the outwardly corrupt Willie, she engages in a serious affair with him, attracted by his ambition to cure poverty in the state. After the deaths of Willie and her brother, Anne marries the changed Jack.

To Jack, Anne is a female ideal of the Old South, a Southern Belle. She is nevertheless quite down-to-earth. From her father, a revered former governor, Anne has inhereited an acute sense of right and wrong, and she is rightfully antipathic towards Willie's visible underhanded tactics. It is only when Jack reveals that her father protected Judge Irwin, whose own corruption resulted in a suicide, that Anne's own ideals are shattered and she is willing to carry on an affair with Willie.

Anne is one of the more perceptive characters of the novel, the only one who perceives and attempts to cure Jack's cynicism and lack of ambition.

**Judge Montague Irwin**

A political figure and Jack's birth father, in addition to having been a father-figure to Jack in his childhood. At the novel's outset, Judge Irwin provides the first basic conflict when he takes a moral stand by refusing to endorse Willie's preferred candidate in the Senate race. Willie orders Jack to dig up dirt on his childhood mentor. Jack discovers the following: years before the events of the novel, when Judge Irwin was the state Attorney General serving under Governor Joel Stanton, he found himself in financial trouble, and Irwin took a bribe from a company. As a result, the company then fired its attorney, Mortimer L. Littlepaugh, who committed suicide. When approached about the matter, Governor Stanton refused to investigate Judge Irwin.

Jack goes to Judge Irwin with this information, threatening to go public with it and ruin his reputation. Hours later, Judge Irwin commits suicide, prompting Jack's mother to reveal that Irwin was Jack's real father from an affair the two had. After his death, Irwin's estate goes to Jack.

**Tiny Duffy**

Willie's lieutenant governor and successor. Duffy is an overweight sycophant who, along with Sadie Burke, initially tricks Willie into running for governor as an operative of candidate Joe Harrison. When Willie becomes governor, he hires Duffy, and throughout the novel Willie unleashes torrents of deserved abuse on him. Duffy quietly endures this treatment in order to further his own political carrer; eventually, Willie grooms him to be his successor.

After Willie refuses his proposed corrupt bargain with contractor Gummy Larson (one that would have earned Duffy a substantial kickback), Duffy uses the information of Willie's affair with Anne Stanton to arrange Willie's murder through Adam Stanton. When Willie dies, Duffy at last becomes governor, and he tries to hire Jack as a muckraker. Jack, realizing the parallel between himself and Duffy, rightfully insults him and refuses the offer, threatening to go public with what he knows about Willie's death.

Tiny Duffy is a human symbol of the part of Willie that engages in corrupt politics. Jack posits this reason for Willie keeping Tiny Duffy, a disloyal man who had duped him once, in his administration:

Tiny Duffy became, in a crazy kind of way, the other self of Willie Stark, and all the contempt and insult which Willie Stark was to heap on Tiny Duffy was nothing but what one self of Willie Stark did to the other self because of a blind, inward necessity. I came to that conclusion only at the very end, a long time afterwards.

Thus, Duffy's conspiracy to murder Willie symbolizes the internal nature of Willie's downfall and the self-destructiveness of Willie's behavior. When Willie, in the last few days of his life, tries to change his ways, Duffy, representing every atrocious element of politics, violently pulls him back into the fray.

**Sadie Burke**

Willie's secretary and mistress. A political operative who has a history with powerful men, Sadie initially appears as an agent of Joe Harrison who dupes Willie into running for governor to split the vote in a race he will eventually lose. Later, when Willie wins the governorship, he hires Sadie as a close confidante. Throughout the novel, she reacts with anger over Willie's other extramarital affairs.

As the only female among Willie's political "men," Sadie is intricately involved in the behind-the-scenes activities of the campaign. Through bitterness and cruelty, she reveals to Willie that he has been fooled by Joe Harrison, tells Jack that Anne and Willie are engaging in an affair, and at last tells Tiny Duffy about the affair, an act that results in Willie's death. Dismayed by what she has done, Sadie checks herself into a sanitarium, and eventually she leaves the state altogether.

Sadie Burke is readily defined by her insecurity and obsession with men in power. She grew up in poverty, and at a young age her face became scarred by smallpox. Throughout the novel, she ferociously struggles to be taken seriously by men, and her political positions are often described with respect to men with whom she had had affairs, Sen-Sen Puckett and Willie Stark. In a way, her epiphany and depture from politics at the end of the novel mirror Jack's own realization.

**Lucy Stark**

Willie's humble, marginalized wife. After Willie was elected governor, Lucy began criticizing the rampant corruption in his administration, and the two grew apart as Willie carried on several extramartial affairs. The two violently disagreed over their son Tom's reckless, immoral behavior, and whether or not he should play football.

Lucy and Willie are close to reconciliation after Tom's accident. Following Willie's and Tom's deaths, Lucy adopts Sibyl Frey's baby (the alleged lovechild of Tom), insisting that the child is her grandson. She tells Jack at the end of the novel that she still believes Willie was a great man.

Lucy is a weak character in the novel, and her humble opinions are consistently ignored by Willie. She stuck by her husband when he lost the county treasurer race, then later dutifully tolerated Willie's showiness after his election as governor while criticizing him acutely on the corruption in his administration. Lucy is one of the more stable characters, and ultimately, many of her worries prove apt: her son is involved in a football accident, and her husband is killed over politics. She is a simple, kind woman who objected to the pride of the men in her family, while remaining faithful in her love for them. In many ways, she represents the kinder qualities of the Old South as well as the South's capacity for innocence and rebirth following great trauma. Jack pities her at first, then ultimately comes to sympathize with her plight.

**Tom Stark**

The freewheeling son of Willie and Lucy. With Willie's encouragement and Lucy's disapproval, Tom becomes a star football player for the state university. He ultimately becomes reckless, arrogant, and irresponsible, getting into a great deal of trouble over the course of the novel. Besides frequent episodes of drinking, fighting, and carousing, Tom's negligence while driving results in the death of a girl. Later, he is alleged to be the father of Sibyl Frey, a situation that puts Willie's political future at risk. He and Willie are frequently at odds, despite Willie's initial encouragement for this behavior and his heavy pride in Tom's football abilities.

Following a brief suspension from the team, Tom is injured in a football accident and falls into a coma. An operation performed by Adam Stanton and approved by Willie to possibly help him regain consciousness fails, and Tom dies a few months after his father does. The initial failure of the operation causes an epiphany for Willie, and he begins to renounce dirty politics shortly before his demise, proposing to name his free hospital in honor of his son.

**Sugar-Boy O'Sheean**

A young Irishman who serves as Willie Stark's bodyguard and driver with great skill at both tasks. Sugar-Boy is depicted as a stuttering simpleton with an addiction to sugar cubes and who is blind in his total devotion to Willie. Sugar-Boy sweetly cares for the Boss when he is drunk and admits to following him because of his ability to speak and the emotions his oratory raises. In many ways, Sugar-Boy represents all of Willie's followers: simple yet with some skills, easily moved by Willie's theatrical language.

At the end of the novel, Sugar-Boy fatally shoots Adam Stanton immediately after he shoots Willie. Later, Jack meets him in a reading room and almost tells him that Tiny Duffy's phone call incited Adam to kill the Boss. So passionate was he, Sugar-Boy was more than willing to kill Duffy, the new governor, in order to avenge Willie's death. Sugar-Boy is easily the most devoted of the "king's men," someone who truly believes in the content of Willie's promises to uplift the poor of the state. He is the most earnest, as well, and the only one whose actions do not directly or indirectly result in Willie's death. Compare his relationship with Willie to those of the dispassionate Jack, the greedy Tiny Duffy, and the fatalistic Sadie Burke.

**Jack's mother**

Unnamed in the novel, Jack's mother is a woman whose doting tendencies and several relationships have a profound effect on Jack's character. She grew up in poverty in Arkansas, where she met Ellis Burden, who took her to Burden's Landing. There, she had an affair with Judge Irwin that resulted in Jack's birth. Ellis left the family, and she went through a succession of marriages: the Tycoon, the Count, and the Young Executive, Theodore Murrell. These events partially contribute to Jack's cynicism and his emotional distance from his mother.

Although Jack's mother was not born wealthy, she raises Jack in an aristocratic manner, wanting him to attend an Ivy League school and disapproving of his connection with Willie. Jack, however, is averse to his mother's designs for his life, and he often critiques her materialism, comparing her newest husband to the furniture in her home.

At the end of the novel, Jack's mother, now an old woman, decides to leave both the Young Executive and her home in Burden's Landing following the death of Judge Irwin, her one love. Jack is heartened by his mother's capacity for love. He ultimately lies to her about the reason for the Judge's death so as not to trouble her.

**Ellis Burden**

Also referred to as the "Scholarly Attorney," Ellis was thought by Jack Burden to have been his father until the revelation that Judge Montague Irwin was Jack's biological parent. The scion of an influential Southern family, Ellis met Jack's mother when she was a simple hill woman in Arkansas and then brought her to Burden's Landing. He married her but walked out when Jack was of a young age after discovering that an affair between Jack's mother and Judge Irwin had been taking place. Ellis went on to commit himself to helping the poor in the capital city and authoring fanatical religious tracts.

Ellis's departure had a dramatic effect on Jack. Jack became emotionally stunted, and he searched for a father figure, finding (unbeknownst to him, his real father) Judge Irwin and, later, Willie Stark to fill this void. Jack furthermore reacts with hostility to religion and scoffs at the work of his father. In the few meetings between Jack and his father, the two argue about far-off theology. Ironically, Jack himself engages in pseudo-religious babble throughout much of the novel. In the final chapter, Jack makes peace with his non-biological father and lets Ellis live in his old age with Jack and Anne.

**Sam MacMurfee**

The governor who served two terms before Willie Stark. Willie defeated him to win election to the governorship. Subsequently, MacMurfee became a figurehead of Willie's opposition in the state legislature. He tries to get Willie impeached on corruption charges in Chapter Three, but he fails. Later in the novel, he manipulates Marvin Frey, whose daughter was possibly impregnated by Willie's son Tom Stark, in order to blackmail Willie. Ultimately, MacMurfee is foiled when Willie decides to buy off his biggest supporter, businessman Gummy Larson.

**Joe Harrison**

Ex-governor whose primary support came from cities in the southern part of the state. In Willie Stark's first race, his agents Tiny Duffy and Sadie Burke trick Willie into running in the election so that Willie will split the country vote with his opponent Sam MacMurfee. Willie ultimately learns of the plan and actively campaigns against Harrison, resulting in a MacMurfee win.

**Joel Stanton**

Former governor of the state and Anne and Adam Stanton's venerable father, who is not alive during the primary events of the novel. He was governor of the state in the 1910s, and Montague Irwin was his attorney general. Stanton's staid moral absolutism inspired his two children to act honorably and initially oppose Willie Stark. When Jack Burden reveals that Stanton protected Irwin after he was accused of having taken a bribe, his children lose their respect for him, and their moral codes are ruined.

**Theodore Murrell (the Young Executive)**

Jack's mother's last husband, whom she marries after a long series of other men in her life. Jack is cynical towards him. Jack's mother leaves Theodore at the end of the novel, after the love of her life, Judge Irwin, commits suicide.

**Hugh Miller**

Distinguished apolitical attorney who serves as Willie Stark's attorney general for some time. Much like Willie, Hugh Miller is a young, rabid reformer. Yet unlike Willie, he rejects the use of corrupt tactics in order to achieve reform. He resigns after Willie pledges to protect Byram B. White, a corrupt man in his cabinet, and spends his time away from politics. At the end of the novel, Jack Burden writes about wanting to go to work for Hugh Miller when he goes back into politics.

Hugh Miller is perhaps the most honorable static character in the novel. He has a deep desire to reform, yet he is completely ethical and unwilling to touch anything remotely immoral.

**Mortimer L. Littlepaugh**

Onetime counsel for the American Electric Power Company. After Attorney General Montague Irwin was bribed by the company, Littlepaugh pushed out. He and his sister Lilly Mae Littlepaugh protested to Governor Stanton but were ignored. He committed suicide shortly thereafter.

**Lily Mae Littlepaugh**

Sister of Mortimer Littlepaugh. She worked as a medium in a Memphis slum when Jack Burden bribed and used emotional pressure in order to get her to admit that Judge Irwin had indirectly caused her brother's suicide. She signs an affidavit attesting to this and provides a letter as evidence.

**Gummy Larson**

Reticent, influential businessman who uses bribery and extortion in order to get the multimillio- dollar contract to build Willie Stark's hospital. Larson is aligned with Willie's chief opposition leader Sam MacMurfee, and Tiny Duffy gets the idea to give the contract to Larson as a way to neutralize his support for MacMurfee and get them both to join Willie's side (Duffy also received a kickback from this deal). Larson eventually does get the contract, yet, much like Tiny Duffy, he must endure a steady stream of castigation from Willie.

**Lois Seager**

Jack Burden's first wife. She married him partly for his family name; he married her because the two were "perfectly adjusted sexually" (416). Jack's slovenly nature and unwillingness to tolerate Lois' friends, combined with his cynicism towards her relative unintelligence, causes the marriage to quickly fail. Jack goes through his first Big Sleep at the end of their marriage, then one day simply walks out on her.

**Byram B. White**

State Auditor under Willie Stark. Byram was involved in a corrupt moneymaking scheme discovered by Willie's opposition in the state legislature, loyal to former governor Sam MacMurfee. Willie fiercely insults Byram, then forces him to sign an undated letter of resignation for Willie to keep in exchange for his protection against the impeachment proceedings taking place against him. Willie's protection of Byram causes Attorney General Hugh Miller to resign and results in impeachment proceedings against Willie himself.

**Hubert Coffee**

Slick agent of contractor Gummy Larson who attempts to bribe Adam Stanton, director of the free hospital, to help get the contract for the hospital for Larson. Adam, enraged by this corrupt proposition, punches Hubert.

**Slade**

Owner of a speakeasy during Prohibition. In 1922, Slade respected Willie's refusal to drink beer during a meeting with Tiny Duffy and Jack; consequently, after Prohibition was repealed, he quickly received a liquor license, a prime location for his new joint ("Crescent Cove")--and money for renovation as his "reward for being an honest man." Slade is generally a simple, naive person, deadpan in response to Jack's sarcasm, and Jack marvels at "how little is required for a man to be lost or saved."

**Sibyl Frey**

Pregnant girl who accused Tom Stark of being the father of her unborn child. To keep the situation under wraps, Willie Stark buys off Sibyl and her father Marvin Frey. After the deaths of Willie and Tom, Sibyl's child is given to Lucy Stark, who names the boy Willie Stark.

**Marvin Frey**

Father of Sibyl Frey. He accuses Tom Stark of having impregnated his daughter. Marvin and Sibyl are used by Willie Stark's political opponent Sam MacMurfee to blackmail Willie. Eventually, Marvin is bought off by Willie.

**Mabel Carruthers**

Judge Irwin's second wife, who appeared to be wealthy, yet in actuality married the Judge for his money and influence.

**Malaciah Wynn**

"Old Leather-Face," an old friend of Willie's whom he encounters in the drug store in Mason City in Chapter 1. He tells Willie that his son murdered someone in a fair fight, and later on Willie arranges for a lawyer for the boy.

**Dolph Pillsbury**

Mason County Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners and local political boss who got Willie Stark the position of County Treasurer. Pillsbury supported awarding the contract to build a new schoolhouse in the county to J.H. Moore, a contractor who did not put in the lowest bid and had a family tie to Pillsbury. As Treasurer, Willie objected, prompting Pillsbury to slander Willie (accusing him of supporting Negro labor) and force him out of office in the next election, despite his fervent attempts to convince voters personally.

**Willie Stark (the baby)**

The baby born to Sibyl Frey and presumed to be Tom's. Named for his grandfather by Lucy, who convinces the Freys to let her adopt the child.

**Cass Mastern**

In the Chapter Four subplot, Cass, brother of Gilbert Mastern, is an ancestor of Jack Burden who commits adultery by sleeping with Annabelle Trice, wife of his good friend Duncan Trice. As a consequence of the affair, Duncan commits suicide, and a married slave, Phebe, is sold by Annabelle after she learns what happened. The event causes Cass to learn the deep consequences of his actions and prior amorality. Cass further realizes that all people are interconnected as if by a "spider web." He takes responsibility for what he did by becoming an abolitionist and trying to find Phebe in order to reunite her with her husband. He fails, then later volunteers to serve the South in the Civil War in a non-combat role. He dies of a gunshot wound, and his journal makes its way back to Jack, who researches the life of Cass for his graduate thesis.

The life and transformation of Cass Mastern introduced in Chapter Four parallels the transformation of Jack that occurs at the end of the novel. As a young college student, Jack failed to grasp why Cass flagellated himself after the suicide of his friend. By the end of the novel, Jack realizes the significance of Cass's actions following Jack's own experience of the deaths of Judge Irwin, Willie Stark, and Adam Stanton. In this respect, the story of Cass Mastern prefigures the rest of the story of Jack Burden.

**Gilbert Mastern**

In the Chapter Four subplot, Gilbert is the brother of Cass Mastern. After growing up in poverty, he becomes successful on his own, then uses his money to help his brother. Gilbert is at heart a good, hardworking man, yet he profits from slavery. He is a parallel to Willie Stark, who uses corrupt methods to achieve noble ends.

**Duncan Trice**

In the Chapter Four subplot, Duncan is the husband of Annabelle Trice and a good friend of Cass Mastern. After Duncan realizes that Annabelle and Cass are having an affair, he commits suicide.

**Annabelle Trice**

In the Chapter Four subplot, the wife of Duncan Trice. Duncan commits suicide after finding out that Annabelle and Cass Mastern were engaged in an illicit affair. Annabelle sells her married slave Phebe after she finds out why Duncan committed suicide. This heartless act and Annabelle's refusal to take responsibility for her husband's death cause Cass to abandon her.

**Phebe**

Married slave of Annabelle Trice. After Duncan Trice kills himself, she finds a wedding ring on his pillow that reveals the adulterous affair between Annabelle and Cass Mastern. This causes Annabelle to sell Phebe without her husband, perhaps into prostitution.

**Old Man Stark**

Willie's elderly country father, whom he visits with a press junket in Chapter 1 to pose for publicity photos. Old Man Stark is implicitly compared to his infirm dog Buck, who is forcibly moved and made to "look like he was glad to see" Willie for a photo.

**Jefferson Davis**

In American history, Davis was President of the Confederate States of America. Davis appears in the Chapter Four subplot, where his influence drives the life of Cass Mastern at critical moments. This is similar to the influence of Willie Stark (a character derived from the historical figure of Huey P. Long) over Jack Burden's life.